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BRIEFING NOTE TO THE MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

ILLUMINATION OF THE SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE IN A RAINBOW THEME
IN SUPPORT OF THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

(For Signature)

TIMELINE

Your decision is requested by **April 3, 2020** in order to inform the Private Partner, Signature on the Saint Lawrence Group (SSLG), of Infrastructure Canada's intention to continue illuminating the Samuel De Champlain (SDC) Bridge in support of the response to COVID-19.

PURPOSE

Given the positive reception of lighting the SDC Bridge in a rainbow theme in support of the response to COVID-19 on Sunday, March 29, 2020, Infrastructure Canada (INFC) is recommending that the rainbow theme continue to be implemented for one hour on Sunday evenings, between 8:30 PM and 9:30 PM, as long as the prohibition of indoor and outdoor gatherings is in effect.

SUMMARY

- On March 29, 2020, the SDC Bridge was lit in a rainbow theme demonstrating solidarity with Canadians supporting one another and in support of those working in essential services.
- Given the positive media coverage and citizen feedback, it is proposed that the SDC Bridge continue to be lit on Sundays throughout the response until such a time as the prohibition of indoor and outdoor gatherings has been lifted.

CONTEXT AND KEY FACTS

- The SDC Bridge is a visible landmark from a number of points across the Montreal region. Illuminating the bridge in the rainbow theme allowed a large number of people in the region to feel connected, while allowing the federal government to demonstrate solidarity and connection with citizens experiencing social distancing.

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- In order to publicize the event, INFC published Twitter, Facebook and Instagram posts discussing the situation and indicating the government's support of Canadians during this time.
- INFC communications indicated that "the engagement and tone on social media has been positive," and that the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister also re-tweeted the INFC post on Twitter, considerably expanding the department's social media reach.
- The online posts had the following interactions, in addition to various comments and requests received by SSL:
 - On Twitter, INFC received 104 re-tweets, 341 likes and 45,115 impressions.
 - On Facebook, the post generated 1,123 reactions comments or shares.
 - On Instagram, the post generated 106 likes and comments.
 - These are higher than normal interactions per post. One person on Twitter and two people on Facebook asked whether the initiative would happen again.
- The illumination of the SDC Bridge in the rainbow theme was also widely applauded by traditional media across the country and was the lead photo on a number of COVID-19 related articles in Montreal on March 30, 2020.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Informing Canadians that the bridge would be illuminated in the rainbow theme for an extended period of time would allow the federal government to continue demonstrating solidarity while communications could encourage citizens to continue practicing social distancing should they wish to view the lights.
- The St. Lawrence Seaway which passes under the SDC Bridge is expected to open in the coming weeks.

Discussions will be held with the Seaway to implement measures to mitigate risks.

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- During parts of the spring and fall, the SDC Bridge is illuminated in a blue-green theme to reduce the impact of the LED architectural lighting on migratory birds. The rainbow theme uses certain colours, specifically reds and yellows, which could impact migratory birds. For this reason, INFC is recommending a limited use of the rainbow theme for one hour on Sundays.
- Should confinement measures be implemented for the Island of Montreal, discussions would be held with local police to ensure that the lighting scheme does not interfere with signage and police lights warning of upcoming checkpoints.
- Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges Incorporated (JCCBI), which operates the Jacques Cartier Bridge, also located in Montreal, is also considering a special illumination of the Jacques Cartier Bridge in support of the response to COVID-19. INFC would work with JCCBI in an effort to coordinate these activities.
- There are no additional costs associated with this request.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that you approve illuminating the SDC Bridge in the rainbow theme on Sundays between 8:30 PM and 9:30 PM in support of the response to COVID-19 and as long as the prohibition of indoor and outdoor gatherings is in effect.

Gillis, Kelly

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Date: 2020.04.01 18:58:19 -04'00'

Kelly Gillis
Deputy Minister
Infrastructure and Communities

Date

☒ I approve. ☐ I do not approve. ☐ For discussion.

McKenna, Catherine

Digitally signed by McKenna, Catherine
Date: 2020.04.02 11:02:30 -04'00'

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities

Date